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AUTHOR Broadbent, William A.
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ABSTRACT

A study used the Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States (V-TECS) workplace skills inventory in a validation exercise for use of the inventory in Hawaii. A facilitator reduced the size of the V-TECS instrument. The resulting document was tested using several colleagues of the principal investigator before it was used in the field. The sample was stratified in a specific way. Small business owners, site managers of franchises, and shift managers of larger firms were selected for the interview group. Opinions of persons new to management who had only recently risen from the ranks were of primary interest. From the original V-TECS material, 12 generic criteria emerged: developing an employment plan; seeking and applying for employment opportunities; accepting employment; communicating on the job; interpreting the economics of work; adapting and coping with change; solving problems and critical thinking; maintaining safe and healthy work environment; demonstrating work ethics and behavior; demonstrating technological literacy; maintaining interpersonal relationships; and demonstrating team work. The survey of 57 items organized in the 12 sections was administered to 136 individuals (131 usable responses). A five-point Likert scale was used, with 5 as the highest ranking. Most ratings were generally high. Even the lowest rated item, assess entrepreneurship skills, received an above average rating of 3.27. (Appendixes include the V-TECS Workplace Skills Inventory and Inventory as Modified and Implemented in Hawaii.) (YLB)

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MARCH 1999

Generic Workplace Skills

For Job Application, Employment Retention, and Career Promotion in Today's Economic Environment

For the Vocational Education State-Administered Program
Under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational
and Applied Technology Education Act

Office of the State Director for Vocational Education
University of Hawai'i
2425 Campus Road • Sinclair Library • Mezzanine 2 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

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Generic Workplace Skills

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William A. Broadbent

March 1999

Office of the State Director for Vocational Education
State Board for Vocational Education
University of Hawaii
Sinclair Library, Mezzanine 2
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

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Introduction

Legal compliance considerations

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act Amendments of 1990, PL 101-397, had two major themes: access to occupational education opportunities by special populations and program improvement. This document, and others preceding it, is designed primarily to facilitate program improvements. Adequacy in meeting the needs of special populations is reported in the Annual Performance Report published each December.

In Section III (g) it is mandated that: "Each State board in consultation with the State council shall establish a limited number of technical committees to advise the council and the board on the development of model curricula to address State labor market needs. Technical committees shall develop an inventory of skills that may be used by the State board to define state-of-art curricula. Such inventory will provide the type and level of knowledge and skills needed for entry, retention and achievement in occupational areas taught in the State. The State board shall establish procedures for membership, operation, and duration of such committees consistent with the purposes of this Act. The membership shall be representatives of (1) employers from any relevant occupation for which the committee is established; (2) trade or professional organizations representing any relevant occupations; and (3) organized labor where appropriate."

The State council has been replaced by the Workforce Development Council, which is administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. The Workforce Development Council is consultative to the State Board.

Rationale

When teaching a subject that clearly has occupational implications, it is important to reference that which is taught with what employers say is relevant. There should be congruence between prescribed educational programs and that which industry thinks is relevant. In Hawaii, the general assumption is that most of the existing curricula are appropriate for the various student populations for which they are offered. However, research has indicated that there is a need for more precise skills identification and more precision in the measurement of the acquisition of those skills. More efforts are needed in the placement of graduates in relevant, "well paying" jobs and those with the prospect of a promising career ladder.

The data reported from the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and other sources indicate that most employment opportunities are found in such comparatively low paying fields as sales, cashiering, waiter/waitress and janitor. Self-sufficiency then becomes the question.

What is needed in Hawaii is a "skilled" workforce. The State needs to develop the capacity to compete for the high technology jobs. To attract new industries, the existence of a skilled work force is the most important inducement for new industry.

Hawaii's Experience with Technical Committees

For several years, the Office of the State Director for Vocational Education, through the mechanism of the federally mandated Technical Committees, has prepared inventories of "skills, knowledge, and personal attributes." These inventories have been developed to be appropriate to Hawaii's unique geographical situation and special workplace requirements. Inventories have been prepared and tested in the areas of

1. Electronics
2. Automotive technology
3. Child care
4. Gerontology
5. Computer programming
6. Graphic arts
7. Accounting
8. Diversified agriculture
9. Food service
10. Drafting
11. Office administration and technology (secretarial)
12. Nurses aide
13. Computer repairer
14. Hotel front desk operations
15. Metals technology
16. Landscaping and turf management
17. Sales
18. Entrepreneurship
19. Business education and office skills

The State, as a member of V-TECS (Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States), has identified generic aspects of occupations that have few regional considerations. Substantial efforts have been made to avoid duplication of effort. The technical committees have been directed to be sensitive to local conditions and requirements. The inventories have been, in effect, "home-grown." These taxonomies have reflected local cultural norms and have been reflective of the Hawaiian economy.

However, up until now the State Board through the auspices of its administrative arm, the Office of the State Director for Vocational Education (OSDVE), has not focused on the generic aspect of workplace placement. This has been done, to a certain extent, by the V-TECS consortium. Most efforts undertaken on a national basis need some refinement to accommodate local considerations. This study makes use of the V-TECS inventory developed nationally. It is in essence a validation exercise for use of the inventory in Hawaii. The inventory of concepts, skills and attributes considers most things associated with job placement success. Job placement success involves the process of successful solicitation of an employment opportunity. The inventory, as slightly modified, also includes the basic skills and understandings necessary for job retention and professional advancement. The primary purpose of this document is to provide data, elicited from local employers and supervisors, about the process of obtaining and retaining a good job.

A different approach has been used in the conceptualization of the technical committee. Traditionally, under the auspices of the Perkins Act of 1984, a Technical Committee was selected from a statewide pool of persons. These persons were selected for their special expertise, relevant experience and an understanding of the local industry. In the past, the technical committees developed several drafts of a given inventory with the assistance of an OSDVE staff member. When consensus was finally reached, the criteria identified were rated by a stratified sample of employers in the particular area under study. Frequencies and measures of central tendency were computed, analyzed, and published.

The process evolved with time, experience, and a more precise understanding of the industry and occupations being studied. This Technical Committee on Workplace Placement reflects broadly on "Concepts, Skills, and Attributes Necessary for Employment, Retention, and Promotion."

A committee, in the traditional sense, was not actually formed. In a departure from past procedures, the initial inventory was not developed by the OSDVE facilitator. As previously mentioned, it was derived from an available V-TECS instrument (refer to Appendix A). However, the facilitator did reduce the size of the V-TECS instrument that was used in Hawaii. The resulting document had a reasonable degree of face validity and was referenced against several of the principal investigator's colleagues before it was used in the field.

Sampling

The sample was stratified in a specific way. Small business owners, site managers of franchises, and shift managers of larger firms were selected for the group to be interviewed. The principal investigator or facilitator was primarily interested in the opinions of persons who were new to management and who had only recently risen from the ranks. When a person becomes management, his or her attitudes about workplace values and organizational priorities may change. However, he or she is not that far removed from the "rank and file" as to preclude an understanding of their concerns and social priorities. He or she is aware of the concerns of employees as well as the priority of management.

The sample, when selected, revealed a strong bias for retail and service agencies. It might be noted that this is characteristic of the economy of the State of Hawaii as a whole. Because of the variance in the method in which the instrument was administered, the survey cannot be considered as meeting the standards of a structured survey methodology. Albeit, a good deal of meaningful information was collected through the pragmatic and generally effective process employed.

As previously suggested, it was decided to edit the V-TECS document. This was done to facilitate acceptance by the intended audience in the setting of Hawaii. So questions that seemed similar or identical were deleted and others not considered relevant to local conditions were either modified or changed. One entire section, "maintaining professionalism," was deleted entirely. The jobs being addressed could not be considered "professional" using the traditional connotation of the word. The items contained in the section were covered, for the most part, in other parts of the inventory. The instrument as modified and employed is reproduced in Appendix "B."

Conceptual Components and Their Specific Rationale

There were twelve generic criteria that emerged from the original V-TECS material forwarded by that organization for use in Hawaii. They were as follows: (1) developing an employment plan; (2) seeking and applying for employment opportunities; (3) accepting employment; (4) communicating on the job; (5) interpreting the economics of work; (6) adapting and coping change; (7) solving problems and critical thinking; (8) maintaining safe and healthy environment; (9) demonstrating work ethics and behavior; (10) demonstrating technological literacy; (11) maintaining interpersonal relationships; and (12) demonstrating team work.

These topical headings and their sequencing were done by the V-TECS staff. There was no indication that any given criterion or group of criteria was weighted more heavily than another nor logical sequencing of items. However, the Hawaii facilitator decided not to change the section titles or the sequence in which sections and/or items were presented.

The following describes each cluster or section although the items are largely self-explanatory.

Developing an employment plan

Some young people, seeking their first job, or older people, who have been out of the job market for years, have an unclear idea about the protocol of finding a position. For that matter, the same could be said to be true for most people trying to find a job. In some cases, finding any kind of a job, often becomes the immediate objective. The situation may require a great deal of expediency. Young people just

leaving high school, junior college, or a four-year college have often been exposed to some type of counseling in the general area of career planning. Unfortunately, for high school students this orientation usually takes place during the ninth grade or freshman year. Few high school freshmen intend to seek immediate employment at the age of 15. As a result, the skills of "resume writing" or "setting up a preliminary interview" have been forgotten or displaced by the time they must seek full-time employment. Many college students may never have held a full-time job. So some structure or sequence needs to be identified in what may be a long and challenging process.

Seeking and applying for employment opportunities

This involves the "nitty gritty" of that which is discussed in the first section. Hopefully, the prospective applicant has a general field of occupational interest. However, it is important to remember that the reference point is Hawaii in 1998.

Because of the State's prolonged economic slump, some applicants may be seeking any kind of employment. It may be an opening for which the applicant has only the most rudimentary skills and qualifications. Realistically, identifying those employers who are actually likely to be hiring is important to planning. The sequence of prescribed steps in the application process may vary from firm to firm. Many companies interview as many as 50 applicants for a single entry-level position. This, in fact, has been established in a number of employer surveys conducted by this principal investigator. Other employers may only consider a handful of applicants for a higher-level position.

Accepting employment

This section of the inventory deals primarily with "paperwork." Most of the paperwork will have to be completed by a personnel specialist or clerk who specializes in personnel matters. An applicant needs to read the forms, ask for explanations, and complete the forms.

Communicating on the job

Prior research, conducted by this investigator and others, indicates that this is one of the most important factors in job retention and advancement. Writing coherently is important. Most employment does not require an exhaustive vocabulary. However, knowing how to write simple, comprehensible sentences is very important. Learning quickly the technical vocabulary of the occupation or firm is a real asset. It is important to be familiar with technical terms that are used in manuals associated with a job.

Interpreting the economics of work

The new employee needs to identify the role and responsibilities of the employer's business in relationship to the larger economic structure; and, as new employee, what is expected of him/her as it relates to business opportunity.

Adapting and coping with change

All social units are dynamic and in a constant state of change or evolution. Appointment of a new supervisor with a different administrative style than the previous occupant takes some adjustment. Organizations are under constant informal or formal reorganization. An applicant who aspires to persist and prosper must be sensitive to these changes. Accommodating changes in management styles, new technology, and/or agency priorities is essential to organizational survival.

Solving problems and critical thinking

Critical thinking is necessary in the analysis of a problem or opportunity. It is also important to analyze the problem, to determine alternative solutions, and to make a decision.

Maintaining safe and healthy work environment

A new employee should be aware of the safety requirements of the work environment. He/she must identify and observe safety and health policies and procedure.

Demonstrating work ethics and behavior

Everyone should be familiar with the general rules, regulations, and policies that govern organizational and interpersonal relationships in the workplace and to act ethically and professionally at all times.

Demonstrating technological literacy

New employees should be aware of the generic technical skills they are expected to have mastered prior to their employment. Once employed, they should be willing to hone those technical competencies that are essential to their job.

Maintaining interpersonal relationships

This section describes those behaviors that a new employee must value in order to be a productive worker, such as recognizing individual diversity and displaying a positive attitude.

Demonstrating team work

A new employee should evaluate the "team" and "individualistic" aspects of the assigned job and the benefits of task completion resulting from multiple input.

Qualifications and Approach Taken in Reporting the Results

As previously indicated, there are twelve categories of items listed on the form used in this study. The one commonality is "employment." The items involve considerations affecting and involving both management and labor. Some categories have more items than others. The report primarily describes the quantitative findings of the undertaking. It tells a great deal about the "employability criteria" used by persons newly appointed to first-level manager. The respondents range from newly appointed shift managers at major fast food outlets to those who have been recognized as preeminent small business persons.

Administration of the Survey

The survey was administered to 136 individuals on the island of Oahu. This was done between April and November of 1998. One hundred and thirty one of the interviews were deemed suitable for use. The sample was stratified geographically by region. Areas from Haleiwa to Hawaii Kai were canvassed. Although the entire state could not be covered, approximately 82 percent of the population of the state resides on Oahu. The areas of Waianae, Haleiwa and Waimanalo resemble, in many respects, the rural settings found in the neighbor islands. The suburban areas of Kailua, Hawaii Kai, and Pearl City also resemble the suburban-like areas of many of the neighbor islands. Downtown Honolulu is considered the only metropolitan area in the state. This urban setting was covered with an intensity appropriate to its population.

As previously mentioned, the persons solicited for interview were predominately from the first-level management of service or retail firms. It was assumed that they would have the perspective of both management and labor. The great majority of those interviewed were in their first management-level position. No human resource specialists or personnel directors, characteristic in the organization of large firms, were solicited for inclusion in this sample. Only persons having day to day contact with people having line responsibilities and those dealing with the public were included. The human resource offices and personnel officers of larger firms have been previously consulted on various studies of a, somewhat, similar nature.

The interviews and data collection process took between fifteen minutes to two hours to conduct. This did not include travel time. Often the participants wanted to study the questions in advance before responding. Some of the data collection took as many as three visits to obtain a usable interview form. All necessary clarifications of terms were provided by the facilitator or principal investigator. About one in

seven of those contacted declined to participate. The reason most frequently given for declining was the lack of time. However, others managed time to provide detailed information and offer extensive anecdotes to their quantified responses.

The instrument included 57 items organized in twelve sections or components. The items, as such, solicited assessments of the relative importance of various concepts, skills, and attributes associated with successful employment. A five point Likert scale was used. A respondent could indicate his or her perception of the relative importance of the item by giving it a very high, or "5" rating; or a "very low," or "1" designation. A "3" rating indicated a "average" or noncommittal assessment. A "2" rating suggested a less than average assessment, and a "4" represented a high or higher than average rating. All comments and other expressed qualifications were recorded on the form itself. The principal investigator conducted all data and information gathering activities.

The data were coded and reduced by the staff of OSDVE. Marginals and measures of central tendency were computed. The items were ranked in order to achieve additional perspective. Please see Table 13 on page 37.

Findings

One of the primary purposes of career counseling is to match a person's personal interests with relevant employment opportunities. Hopefully, when one enters the job market on a full-time basis, he/she will be able to obtain a position that is consistent with his/her primary interests.

Most of the respondents in the survey agreed that "matching interest to employment area" was an important consideration. In about 79 percent of the recorded assessments, respondents rated this item as either an important or very important consideration (refer to Table 1). The average rating was 4.10. Only three persons in the sample gave this consideration a rating of less than "3".

Equally important, to some people, is matching the ability or potential of an individual to do a given job with that job. On item 1.2 of the inventory, participants were asked if it was important to "Match aptitudes with employment area." Nearly half of those canvassed thought this was of paramount importance (refer to Table 1). However, the remainder of the study population was not as confident that this was as important. The average score was only 3.75.

On item 1.3, "Identify short term work goals," most felt that it was important to do this. However, in relation to the other things measured in this section, it was not relatively important. The average rating was a 3.67, which was the lowest ranked mean score for that particular section (refer to Table 1).

The last two items in the section devoted to "Developing an employment plan" were very similar to the first item. "Attitudes" and "personality types" were similar but not exactly the same as "interest." It might be presumed that "attitudes" were judged more important than interest. Seventy-seven percent thought a "positive attitude" rated a

"4" or "5" (refer to Table 1). Previous research conducted by this principal investigator or facilitator has indicated that "positive attitude" is of paramount value to most employers. Almost half thought it was critically important to match one's personality to a job.

Table 1

Developing an Employment Plan

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

Concept, Skill or Attribute		1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
1.1	Match interest to employment area	1	2	18	40	39	100	4.10	1-5	5
1.2	Match aptitudes to employment area	1	2	20	31	46	100	3.75	1-5	5
1.3	Identify short term work goals	4	6	34	32	24	100	3.67	1-5	3
1.4	Match attitudes to job area	2	2	19	37	40	100	4.13	1-5	5
1.5	Match personality type to job area	2	2	21	26	49	100	4.17	1-5	5

Section 2 deals with the actual application process. Item 2.1, "Locate employment opportunities" seemed somewhat confusing to many of those who were interviewed. Many wondered whether this item meant "finding a given opening" or if it involved simply identifying the mechanism for getting employed with any firm or agency. Participants in the survey were counseled that the former interpretation was that which was intended. Nearly two-thirds of the responses were higher than "3."

Item 2.2 asked how important it was for the applicant to identify the requirements of a position opening. Most respondents thought this was an important consideration. Over 75 percent rated this item as being "important" ("4") or "very important" ("5"). Please refer to Table 2.

Table 2

Seeking and Applying for Employment Opportunities

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
2.1	Locate employment opportunities	2	4	29	33	32	100	3.88	1-5	4
2.2	Match aptitudes to employment area	2	3	19	31	45	100	4.14	1-5	5
2.3	Locate resources for finding employment	3	6	37	34	20	100	3.60	1-5	4
2.4	Prepare a resume	8	8	30	24	30	100	4.07	1-5	3, 5
2.5	Prepare for job interview	5	8	24	28	35	100	3.76	1-5	4
2.6	Write job application letter	6	9	31	30	24	100	3.54	1-5	3
2.7	Write interview follow-up letter	9	15	31	23	22	100	3.33	1-5	3
2.8	Complete application form	5	2	20	22	51	100	4.11	1-5	5
2.9	Identify attire for job interview	3	2	26	24	45	100	4.05	1-5	5

"Locate resources for finding, employment," which is item 2.3, was interpreted to mean searching classified advertisements, contacting an employment agency, or soliciting the services of friends. Approximately half (54 percent) gave this item an above average assessment (refer to Table 2). The mean score was 3.60. "Preparing a resume" was rated much higher—4.07.

Learning how to prepare a resume often takes place in high school. Counselors, both from the educational and business communities, can assist an applicant with this. Many of the firms interviewed were hiring people at a level that did not require a resume or even an in-depth application. As a consequence "Preparing a resume" was not as valued as it might have been for higher-level positions. Only 16 percent gave the item a below average rating (refer to Table 2). The mean score was 4.07.

Item number 2.5 involved preparing for an interview. Only thirteen percent of the participants in the canvas felt interview preparation warranted a low rating (refer to Table 2).

Item 2.6 addressed the preparation of a letter of application. Nearly 55 percent rated this item a "4" or "5".

Writing an interview follow-up letter did not seem of particular importance to those interviewed. The average rating was only 3.33 (refer to Table 2). The relative ranking of the item was 55 out of a possible 57. In other words, 54 of the items on the interview schedule were of greater importance.

The next item, 2.8, was described as "Complete application form." The average rating was 4.11. The largest number of respondents, 51 percent, gave this item the highest rating (refer to Table 2).

Item number 2.9, "Identify attire for job interview," meant "appropriate attire."

The inclusion of section 3.0 in the inventory involved "Accepting Employment." A new employee must understand the nature of accepting a job, especially in light of getting one's name added to the payroll. Item 3.1, "Complete Employee's Withholding Allowance," generated an average score of 4.30 (refer to Table 3).

Table 3

Accepting Employment

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
3.1	Complete employee's withholding allowance	3	2	16	16	63	100	4.32	1-5	5
3.2	Certificate form W-4	2	2	18	14	63	100	4.30	1-5	5

Section 4 dealt with aspects of communication skills—written, oral, and intangible skills such as interpreting body language.

Most respondents felt that sensitivity, in this area, was a desirable employee attribute. Only about 7 percent of the supervisors interviewed did not think that understanding body language was particularly important (refer to Table 4). The mean score was 3.96. This represented a comparatively low ranking.

An interesting dichotomy appeared on the item "Prepare written communication." Although 87 percent of the supervisors thought written communication skills were somewhere between "moderately important" and "very important," only 26 percent gave this attribute the highest priority (refer to Table 4). Once again, this may reflect the nature of their typical employees and the requirements of the jobs. Most of the supervisors interviewed were interested in filling jobs that did not require a of writing. The positions to which they generally hired did not require mastery of technical, written material.

It was more important that prospective employees "Follow written directions." On item 4.3, 47 percent of those participating gave this item the highest rating possible (refer to Table 4). On this item, the mean score was 4.10.

Table 4

Communicating on the Job

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
4.1	Interpret use of body language	2	5	19	40	34	100	3.96	1-5	4
4.2	Prepare written communication	5	8	24	37	26	100	3.72	1-5	4
4.3	Follow written directions	5	5	12	31	47	100	4.10	1-5	5

Section 5 focuses on "Interpreting the Economics of Work."

On item 5.1, "Describe responsibility of job assignment," 53 percent of those participating in the survey gave this item a "5" or the highest rating possible (refer to Table 5). The mean was 4.35, and the item was ranked sixth out of the 57 workplace criteria (refer to Table 13). Clearly, the supervisors thought it was very important that an employee know what was expected of her/him.

Closely allied with the first item was item 5.2. This item was presented as "Describe responsibility of employer or management." Seventy-nine percent of the supervisors rated this item "4" or "5" (refer to Table 5). The mean score of 4.22 was the second highest in this segment of the instrument (refer to Table 13).

The next item required some explanation on the part of the interviewer or principal investigator. The item described as "Investigate opportunities and options for business ownership," presented some difficulty in interpretation. Only one in five of those interviewed gave this item the highest rating (refer to Table 5). The

average score was 3.33, and this was the next to the lowest of the 57 items when placed in rank order (refer to Table 13).

Table 5

Interpreting the Economics of Work

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
5.1	Describe responsibility of job assignment	0	2	11	34	53	100	4.35	1-5	5
5.2	Describe responsibility of employer or management	1	5	15	33	46	100	4.22	1-5	5
5.3	Investigate opportunities and options for business ownership	8	14	31	27	20	100	3.33	1-5	3
5.4	Assess entrepreneurship skills	5	12	31	29	23	100	3.27	1-5	3
5.5	Identify work-related terminology	0	5	24	37	34	100	3.91	1-5	3

Item 5.4, described as "Assess entrepreneurship skills," ranked last with a mean rating of 3.27 (refer to Tables 5 and 13).

On the item, "Identify work-related terminology," no respondent gave this a "1" or the lowest rating (refer to Table 5). The average rating was 3.91.

The first item in section 6 was "Evaluate transition plan." Less than one in five found this to be a very important attribute (refer to

Table 6). The mean for this item was 3.61 and the item ranked 50th out of the 57 items in relative importance (refer to Table 13).

Table 6

Adapting and Coping Change

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
6.1	Evaluate transition plan	4	8	35	34	19	100	3.61	1-5	3
6.2	Exhibit ability to handle stress	2	8	16	30	44	100	4.07	1-5	5
6.3	Recognize need to change or quit job	1	8	23	32	36	100	3.97	1-5	5

On the next item which was described as "Exhibit ability to handle stress," three out of four of the respondents gave this item an above average rating (refer to table 6). The average score was 4.07. It was considered important by the respondents.

The last item in section 6, also received mixed reactions from employers and supervisors. Thirty-six percent of the supervisors gave this the highest rating (refer to Table 6). However, others were not so sure that this was a characteristic to be valued.

One of the larger sections of the inventory involved "problem solving" and "critical thinking." The first item in this section involved the ability to identify a problem. Over half of the new supervisors and managers gave "problem identification" the highest rating (refer to Table 7). The mean was a high 4.35 and the item ranked 5th overall (refer to Table 13).

Identifying a solution to the problem at hand was considered as almost equally important. An equal number of supervisors rated this item a "5" as had the previous item (refer to Table 7). However, the overall average rating was a somewhat lower value of 4.30. Reasoning skills, which are an inherent part of problem identification and solution selection, was ranked even higher by some of the respondents (refer to Table 7). Almost 60 percent of the respondents gave this their highest assessment. However, the overall assessment averaged 4.18.

As with all of the items that involved problem solving and critical thinking criteria, "Evaluate options" as a criterion for employability received an average rating of 4.19, and only three participants in the survey rated it a less than average assessment (refer to Table 7).

Table 7

Solving Problems and Critical Thinking

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
7.1	Identify the problem	0	3	13	30	54	100	4.35	1-5	5
7.2	Identify solutions to a problem and their impact	1	7	7	31	54	100	4.30	1-5	5
7.3	Employ reasoning skills	0	9	5	28	58	100	4.18	1-5	5
7.4	Evaluate options	0	3	17	36	44	100	4.19	1-5	5
7.5	Set priorities	0	3	17	33	47	100	4.21	1-5	5
7.6	Select and implement a solution to a problem	2	5	14	35	44	100	4.18	1-5	5
7.7	Evaluate results of implemented option	2	6	18	37	37	100	4.00	1-5	4, 5
7.8	Access employer and employee responsibility in solving a problem	0	4	21	34	41	100	4.10	1-5	5

Item 7.5, "Set priorities," received the highest rating available on the scale from 47 percent of the respondents (refer to Table 7). The clear mode on this, as with all but one of the items in this section, was "5."

On "Select and implement a solution to a problem," the average rating was 4.18. However, this was not as high as the item involved with "Problem identification." Forty-four percent of the participants in the sample rated this item a "5."

"Evaluate results of implemented option" was given a higher than an average assessment of "3" by about 74 percent of those participating (refer to Table 7).

Item 7.8 involved "Access employer and employee responsibility in solving a problem." Only 4 percent of the respondents did not think this was an important consideration (refer to Table 7). It received an average rating of about 4.10.

Section 8 involved the matter of safety. This section of the instrument produced some of the highest ratings.

Fifty-six percent of the respondents gave the "Identification of safety and health rules and procedures" their highest rating (refer to Table 8). The overall assessment of the sample population produced a mean score of 4.30. The ability to demonstrate proficiency in the use of equipment involved in the operation of a job was even more important. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents rated this item "5" (refer to Table 8). "Act during emergencies" was also important. Almost three out of four respondents gave this item an above average rating (refer to Table 8). The mean score on this criterion was 4.23.

On item number 8.4, "Maintain work area," the mean score was 4.26, and fewer than 8 percent of those who were questioned gave this item a score less than the average rating of "3" (refer to Table 8). The ability to identify hazardous substances in the workplace was also highly valued. Here 59 percent of those questioned gave the item the highest rating possible (refer to Table 8). The mean was 4.29.

Table 8

Maintain Safe and Healthy Work Environment

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
8.1	Identify safety and health rules/procedures	0	2	15	27	56	100	4.30	1-5	5
8.2	Demonstrate the knowledge of the equipment in the work place	1	2	14	25	58	100	4.36	1-5	5
8.3	Act during emergencies	2	6	13	24	55	100	4.23	1-5	5
8.4	Maintain work area	2	5	11	28	54	100	4.26	1-5	5
8.5	Identify hazardous substances in the work place	2	5	14	20	59	100	4.29	1-5	5

Section 9 contained items which surface when decisions must be made regarding retention or promotion of an employee. For instance, item 9.1 sought to determine if the employee understands the rules, regulations, and policies of the workplace. Only ten percent of those asked felt that this was less than an "average" consideration (refer to Table 9). The average rating was 4.14, which fell just about at the median in the ranking of items (refer to Table 13).

"Practice cost effectiveness" was the second item in terms of perceived importance in this section. Almost all the respondents were favorably inclined to this item. However, there was a range in the responses from an average rating of "3" to a much stronger endorsement of "5" (refer to Table 9). The average score was 4.08.

Table 9

Demonstrate Work Ethics and Behavior

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

Concept, Skill or Attribute		1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
9.1	Identify established rules, regulations and policies	2	8	13	27	50	100	4.14	1-5	5
9.2	Practice cost effectiveness	2	1	23	35	39	100	4.08	1-5	5
9.3	Practice time management	1	2	14	37	46	100	4.27	1-5	5
9.4	Assume responsibility for decisions and actions	1	1	17	31	50	100	4.29	1-5	5
9.5	Display initiative	2	1	10	38	49	100	4.32	1-5	5
9.6	Display assertiveness	2	2	14	36	46	100	4.25	1-5	5
9.7	Demonstrate willingness to learn	1	1	11	32	55	100	4.41	1-5	5

On item 9.3, "Practice time management," 83 percent rated the item a "4" or "5" (refer to Table 9). The average score was 4.27, and the mode was "5."

On item 9.4, which involved employees taking responsibility for their decisions and actions, 50 percent rated the item "5" (refer to Table 9). The mean score was 4.29.

The next two items were fairly similar in context. They involve "initiative" and "assertiveness." On item 9.5 "Display initiative," nearly half of those surveyed thought this quality warranted a "5"

rating (refer to Table 9). The average score was 4.32. The aggregate rating for "Display assertiveness" was slightly lower. The participants in the survey rated this item 4.25, and about 82 percent felt that the concept warranted an above average rating (refer to Table 9).

The highest rated item in this particular section and for the inventory as a whole was the last one, "Demonstrate willingness to learn." It was considered the highest of all workplace skills listed. Fifty-five percent of the supervisors surveyed awarded this item the highest rating (refer to Tables 9 and 13). It might be implied from this finding that employers are willing to hire someone who does not demonstrate job skills but has the willingness to learn.

Section 10 was titled "Demonstrate technological literacy." About one in four felt that "keyboarding" warranted a high rating (refer to Table 10). However, the average score was only 3.39 and that was near the bottom of the ranking of all items (refer to Table 13). There was a similar pattern of response on the item "Demonstrate basic knowledge of computing." Less than one in five thought the criterion warranted the highest rating (refer to Table 10) and the average rating was 3.52.

Table 10

Demonstrate Technological Literacy

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
10.1	Demonstrate basic keyboard skills	9	16	27	21	27	100	3.39	1-5	3, 4
10.2	Demonstrate computing basic knowledge	12	16	31	20	21	100	3.52	1-5	3

Section 11 involved "Maintaining interpersonal relationships." The first item in this section was described as "Value individual diversity." About 72 percent of tile participants in the study rated the value of individual diversity in the workplace at "4" or "5" (refer to Table 11). The average score of the 131 respondents was 4.10.

Table 11

Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

Concept, Skill or Attribute		1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
11.1	Value individual diversity	0	3	25	31	41	100	4.10	1-5	5
11.2	Channel and control reactions	0	4	19	32	45	100	4.12	1-5	5
11.3	Resolve conflicts	0	5	28	31	46	100	4.00	1-5	5
11.4	Display a positive attitude	0	2	15	27	56	100	4.33	1-5	5

Item 11.2 was described as "Channel and control emotions." Forty-five percent of the respondents gave this the highest rating (refer to Table 11). On this item, as on each of the others in this section, the criteria were deemed important. The average score was 4.12.

One of the things that managers are expected to do is to settle conflicts in the workplace. About 46 percent of those in the survey thought this was highly important (refer to Table 11). The mean score was 4.00. That aggregate score placed the item below the median of all scores (refer to Table 13).

Fifty-six percent of the supervisors rated "positive attitude" a "5." The mean of 4.33 was one of the highest aggregate scores observed.

The last section of the inventory is entitled "Demonstrating team work." On the item "Match team member skills and group activity," 70 percent of the supervisors responded with a "4" or "5." The modal response was "5" and the aggregate mean was 4.09 (refer to Table 12).

Table 12

Demonstrating Team Work

N=131

Relative Importance to Those Responding

Horizontal Percentages

	Concept, Skill or Attribute	1 low	2	3	4	5 high	Total	X	Range	Mode
12.1	Match team member skills and group activity	1	1	28	28	42	100	4.09	1-5	5
12.2	Work with team members	0	3	21	28	48	100	4.19	1-5	5
12.3	Complete a relevant task	0	2	18	32	48	100	4.38	1-5	5
12.4	Evaluate outcomes	0	3	21	37	39	100	3.88	1-5	5

On item 12.2, "Work with team members," 48 percent of those participating in the study rated this item a "5" (refer to Table 12).

Item 12.3 is "Complete a relevant task." Almost everyone agreed with this criteria. The average score, 4.38, placed this item second in the overall ranking (refer to Tables 12 and 13).

The final item on the inventory involved "evaluation." Thirty-nine percent of the participants gave "evaluation" the highest rating, and the mean score was 3.88 (refer to Table 12).

Some Observations of a General Nature, Summary of Findings, and a Brief Discussion of the Results

Over the past two decades, there has been a good deal of discussion about standards and accountability. Traditionally, it was possible to review a person's certificates, diplomas, and transcripts to ascertain his/her generic preparation for the workplace. Now an applicant's achievement of competencies and standards are being carefully studied.

Many institutions have begun to rely on standardized test scores as an indicator of an individual's actual competency. Scores have also become an indicator of workplace readiness.

A prospective employer will look to those standards and competencies in ascertaining readiness of a job applicant. As a result, the business community has begun to demand that relevant skills be identified. Skills standards are then to be used to demonstrate an applicant's actual competence in a given area. The Carl Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Act of 1984 first called for state-wide Technical Committees to ascertain the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to do a given job. Many states, including Hawaii, developed such committees. In Hawaii, 20 technical reports have been prepared to date.

The instrument used in this validation exercise was derived from the V-TECS Workplace Skills Inventory. It was initially modified in the interests of brevity and internal consistency.

There were 12 sections in the generic workplace inventory used by this particular study. Some items covered things relevant to the initial job search. Other sections involved factors dealing with retention and promotion.

Table 13 shows the complete rank order listing of all 57 generic workplace inventory skills used in this study.

It should be noted that most of the ratings, in this validation exercise, were generally high. Even the lowest rated item, "Assess entrepreneurship skills," received an above average rating of 3.27.

Two of the top three ranked items involved the individual's basic approach to the workplace. "Willingness to learn" was ranked highest and "Display a positive attitude" ranked sixth. However, there was only .8 of a point in the aggregate scores generated by the two items.

From the standpoint of supervisors, willingness to learn may be the most critical factor in workplace readiness. The second highest ranked item involved "Complete a relevant task." The third and fourth highest rated criteria involved knowledge components. More specifically, they involved "Knowledge of equipment" and a clear understanding of the individual's "job assignment" within the organization. The first of these knowledge components may reflect the importance of adjusting to the rapid growth in technology characteristics of many workplaces.

The item that was ranked fifth had to do with "problem solving." The most important component of that section was "problem identification." All other items were generally rated as being important, but the key element is perceived as realizing a problem exists. The data would tend to suggest that the process of solving the problem is really secondary.

As previously mentioned, the sections and items were organized in a manner that suggested an intended sequence. The first section dealt with the initial activities in finding a job. The final section involved an assessment of the employee in terms of being a "team player."

In the first section, the respondents were most likely to value matching an individual with the job. The items measuring "interest," "attitudes," and "personality" were rated as high considerations.

The actual process of application was the central consideration of the second section. Preparing an attractive resume, completing the application neatly and completely, and dressing appropriately for the interview were considered quite important. No one reported hiring anyone without an interview. Few seemed to place a high value of a follow-up letter. However, this may have been due to the level at which those surveyed did most of their hiring.

On the section dealing with communications, the supervisors gave highest marks to "following written communications."

In Section 7, "problem solving" and "critical thinking" were addressed. Identifying the fact that a problem may exist received the most attention. Sorting through options, determining the best solution, and implementing that solution also were highly valued. All items on this section had an average rating of 4.00 or higher.

All of those interviewed appeared to have a sincere interest in safety and health considerations. They were particularly keen about "rules," "procedures," and "hazardous substances."

Section 9 dealt with work ethics and behavior. "Initiative," "time management," and "assertiveness" were the things most valued by the managers and supervisors.

"Maintaining interpersonal relationships" was Section 11. Three items in the section involved controlling your temper, solving your problems and keeping positive. "Positive attitudes" in workplace situations has a high degree of validity and has appeared with reliability in employer satisfaction surveys conducted in Hawaii.

Section 12 seemed to imply that being a "team player" is the paramount quality of acceptable workplace behavior. "Complete a relevant task" was the highest rated item in this section. Most respondents thought teamwork was one good way to conduct business in the workplace.

Only two respondents gave "evaluation" less than an average rating.

Table 13

Workplace Concept, Skills or Attributes Listed in Rank Order in Terms of Perceived Importance

Rank Order	Item	Description	X
1	9.7	Demonstrate willingness to learn	4.41
2	12.3	Complete a relevant task	4.38
3	8.2	Demonstrate the knowledge of the equipment in the workplace	4.36
4	5.1	Describe responsibilities of job assignment	4.35
5	7.1	Identifying the problem	4.35
6	11.4	Display a positive attitude	4.33
7	7.3	Employer reasoning skills	4.33
8	3.1	Complete employees Withholding Allowance	4.32
9	9.5	Display initiative	4.32
10	3.2	Certificate Form W-4	4.30
11	7.2	Identifying solutions to a problem and their impact	4.30
12	8.1	Identify safety and health/rules procedures	4.30
13	8.5	Identify hazardous substances in the workplace	4.29
14	9.4	Assume responsibility for decisions and actions	4.29
15	9.3	Practice time management	4.27

Rank Order	Item	Description	X
16	8.4	Maintain work area	4.26
17	9.6	Display assertiveness	4.25
18	8.3	Act during emergencies	4.23
19	5.2	Describe responsibilities of employers or management	4.22
20	7.5	Set priority	4.21
21	7.4	Evaluate options	4.19
22	12.2	Work with team members	4.19
23	7.6	Select and implement a solution to a problem	4.18
24	1.5	Match personality type to job area	4.17
25	2.2	Match aptitudes to employment area	4.14
26	9.1	Identify established rules, regulations, and policies	4.14
27	1.4	Match attitudes to job area	4.13
28	11.2	Channel and control emotional reactions	4.12
29	2.8	Complete application form	4.11
30	7.8	Access employer and employee responsibility in solving problem	4.10
31	1.1	Match interest to employment area	4.10
32	4.3	Follow written directions	4.10
33	12.1	Match team member skills and group activity	4.09
34	11.1	Value individual diversity	4.09
35	9.2	Practice cost effectiveness	4.08
36	2.4	Prepare resume	4.07

Rank Order	Item	Description	X
37	2.9	Identify attire for job interview	4.07
38	6.2	Exhibit ability to handle stress	4.07
39	7.7	Evaluate results of implemented plan	4.00
40	11.3	Resolve conflicts	4.00
41	6.3	Recognize need to change or quit job	3.97
42	4.1	Interpret use of body language	3.96
43	5.5	Identify work-related terminology	3.91
44	2.1	Locate employment opportunities	3.88
45	12.4	Evaluate outcomes	3.88
46	2.5	Prepare for job interview	3.75
47	1.2	Match aptitudes to employment area	3.75
48	4.2	Prepare written communication	3.72
49	1.3	Identify short term work goals	3.67
50	6.1	Evaluate transition plan	3.61
51	2.3	Locate resources for finding employment	3.60
52	2.6	Write job application letter	3.54
53	10.2	Demonstrate computing basic knowledge	3.52
54	10.1	Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills	3.39
55	2.7	Write interview follow-up letter	3.33
56	5.3	Investigate opportunities and options for business ownership	3.33
57	5.4	Assess entrepreneurship skills	3.27

Appendix A

V-TECS Workplace Skills Inventory

41

Workplace Skills

Tomorrow's worker must meet world-class standards, be a creative and responsible problem solver, have skills and attitudes on which employers can build, and fit into a high-performance organization.

The 98 Workplace Skills identified by commerce and industry across the country can help assure our workers are ready to meet the challenge.

VTECS

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Introduction

Workplace Skills

In September 1991, Illinois, in conjunction with V-TECS established an initial commerce and industry advisory group to identify the workplace skills needed by all employees. Individuals selected to participate represented large and small businesses from rural and urban settings. An extended advisory group of 49 individuals was also selected from the 23 V-TECS member states.

Information on workplace skills was collected from all member states then validated by the two advisory groups (listed on pages 9-11). A set of 98 workplace skills determined to be critical for every worker was developed. Essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with each of the 98 skills were identified. These skills were then grouped into 13 duty areas and performance standards were set, instructional activities were designed, and an item bank was developed. The material was field tested in 16 states (see page 12).

Workplace skills are defined as the generic essential employment skills related to seeking, obtaining, keeping and advancing in any job. You may review the complete list of Workplace Skills on page 3. On pages 4-7, all of the Elements for one of the skills is shown. As you examine this example, remember that all these elements were developed for each of the 98 Workplace Skills.

Workplace Skills

Duty/Task List

Page 1 *** V-TECS DIRECT ***

DUTY/TASK LIST

Occupation: 801 WORKPLACE SKILLS

D/T Duty/Task Description

A 000 DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN
A 001 Match interests to employment area
A 002 Match aptitudes to employment area
A 003 Identify short term work goals
A 004 Match attitudes to job area
A 005 Match personality type to job area
A 006 Match physical capabilities to job area
A 007 Identify career information from counseling sources
A 008 Demonstrate a drug-free status

B 000 SEEKING AND APPLYING FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
B 001 Locate employment opportunities
B 002 Identify job requirements
B 003 Locate resources for finding employment
B 004 Prepare a resume
B 005 Prepare for job interview
B 006 Identify conditions for employment
B 007 Evaluate job opportunities
B 008 Identify steps in applying for a job
B 009 Write job application letter
B 010 Write interview follow up letter
B 011 Complete job application form
B 012 Identify attire for job interview

C 000 ACCEPTING EMPLOYMENT
C 001 Apply for social security number
C 002 Complete state and federal tax forms
C 003 Accept or reject employment offer
C 004 Complete Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate Form W-4

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DUTY/TASK LIST

Occupation: 801 WORKPLACE SKILLS

D/T Duty/Task Description

D 000 COMMUNICATING ON THE JOB
D 001 Communicate orally with others
D 002 Use telephone etiquette
D 003 Interpret the use of body language
D 004 Prepare written communication
D 005 Follow written directions
D 006 Ask questions about task

E 000 INTERPRETING THE ECONOMICS OF WORK
E 001 Identify the role of business in the economic system
E 002 Describe responsibilities of employee
E 003 Describe responsibilities of employer or management
E 004 Investigate opportunities and options for business ownership
E 005 Assess entrepreneurship skills

F 000 MAINTAINING PROFESSIONALISM
F 001 Participate in employment orientation
F 002 Assess business image, products and/or services
F 003 Identify positive behavior
F 004 Identify company dress and appearance standards
F 005 Participate in meetings
F 006 Identify work related terminology
F 007 Identify how to treat people with respect

G 000 ADAPTING AND COPING CHANGE
G 001 Identify elements of job transition
G 002 Formulate transition plan
G 003 Identify implementation procedures for a transition plan
G 004 Evaluate the transition plan
G 005 Exhibit ability to handle stress
G 006 Recognize need to change or quit a job
G 007 Write a letter of resignation

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DUTY/TASK LIST

Occupation: 801 WORKPLACE SKILLS

D/T Duty/Task Description

H 000 SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
H 001 Identify the problem
H 002 Clarify purposes and goals
H 003 Identify solutions to a problem and their impact
H 004 Employ reasoning skills
H 005 Evaluate options
H 006 Set priorities
H 007 Select and implement a solution to a problem
H 008 Evaluate results of implemented option
H 009 Organize workloads
H 010 Access employer and employee responsibility in solving a problem

I 000 MAINTAINING SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT
I 001 Identify safety and health rules/procedures
I 002 Demonstrate the knowledge of equipment in the work place
I 003 Identify conservation and environmental practices and policies
I 004 Act during emergencies
I 005 Maintain work area
I 006 Identify hazardous substances in the work place

J 000 DEMONSTRATING WORK ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR
J 001 Identify established rules, regulations and policies
J 002 Practice cost effectiveness
J 003 Practice time management
J 004 Assume responsibility for decisions and actions
J 005 Exhibit pride
J 006 Display initiative
J 007 Display assertiveness
J 008 Demonstrate a willingness to learn
J 009 Identify the value of maintaining regular attendance
J 010 Apply ethical reasoning

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DUTY/TASK LIST

Occupation: 801 WORKPLACE SKILLS

D/T Duty/Task Description

K 000 DEMONSTRATING TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY
K 001 Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills
K 002 Demonstrate basic knowledge of computing
K 003 Recognize impact of technological change on tasks and people

L 000 MAINTAINING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
L 001 Value individual diversity
L 002 Respond to praise or criticism
L 003 Provide constructive praise or criticism
L 004 Channel and control emotional reactions
L 005 Resolve conflicts
L 006 Display a positive attitude
L 007 Identify and react to sexual intimidation/ harassment

M 000 DEMONSTRATING TEAM WORK
M 001 Identify style of leadership used in team work
M 002 Match team member skills and group activity
M 003 Work with team members
M 004 Complete a team task
M 005 Evaluate outcomes

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Workplace Skills

Elements for

DUTY: H Solving Problems and Critical Thinking
TASK: 006 Set priorities.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

CONDITIONS FOR PERFORMANCE OF TASK:
Prioritization Worksheet

PERFORMANCE:
Set priorities

STANDARD:
Six tasks in the three situations must be prioritized and the reasons for prioritization justified.

SOURCE:
Workplace Skills committee

PERFORMANCE STEPS:

1. List work tasks that must be accomplished.
2. Evaluate the work list for urgent tasks to complete.
3. Rank the items in order of need for completion.
4. List reasons for placing each task in it's position.

ENABLING COMPETENCIES:

1. Define priorities.
2. Recall information about values and attitudes.
3. Put a list of tasks in order by priority for accomplishment.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

RELATED ACADEMIC SKILLS:

LA006 Adapts Strategy Reading
LA005 Adapts Strategy Listening
LA007 Adapts Strategy Speaking
LA035 Attends Directions/task
LA046 Collects/Organizes Information-oral/written Reading
LA078 Composes/Edits Paragraphs Sequence
LA099 Composes/Edits Sentences
LA102 Composes/Edits Sentences Capitalization
LA103 Composes/Edits Sentences Completeness
LA112 Composes/Edits Sentences Punctuation
LA114 Composes/Edits Sentences Spelling
LA146 Comprehends Information-written Rationale
LA147 Comprehends Information-written Sequence
LA182 Evaluates Information-written Appropriateness
LA258 Infers/Predicts Information-written Purpose
LA260 Infers/Predicts Information-written Sequence
LA263 Presents Formal speech Persuasive

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Lead a discussion on what priorities are and how setting priorities depends on values, attitudes, environment, etc.
2. Role-play situations where priorities must be set and analyze why students prioritized the way they did.
3. Lead a group discussion on current situations where the students have had to set priorities.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

4. Instruct students to prioritize a given problem situation and explain their reasons for prioritizing that way.
5. Assign a written list of tasks to be performed tomorrow.
6. Have students prioritize the next day's tasks including home activities, school activities and personal activities.
7. Instruct students to complete the Performance Activity.
8. Evaluate student's performance using the Performance Evaluation Checklist.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

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Workplace Skills

Elements for

DUTY: H Solving Problems and Critical Thinking
TASK: 006 Set priorities.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

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16 Kimbrell G. and Vineyard, B. "Activities for succeeding in the world of work." McKnight Publishing Company. Bloomington, IL 1992

17 The Ohio State University. "MarkED: Human Relations LAPs." IDECC, Inc. Columbus, OH. 1980

18 Performance Activity I - Prioritization Worksheet

19 Performance Activity II - Work Assignment Worksheet

20 Performance Evaluation Checklist - Setting Priorities

INSTRUCTIONAL WORKSHEET

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY I

PERFORMANCE SKILL H006 - Set priorities

OBJECTIVE

Given problem situations, students must prioritize the situations and state two reasons why they prioritized that way.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Read the situation. After each situation give two reasons why the task was given priority.

TIPS

1. Think about which task must take priority.
2. People prioritize differently.

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY I

Prioritization Worksheet

SITUATION

You are working on a production report that is due tomorrow. The phone rings and it is your friend. He is working on his car and needs your help with the repair work as you are the only one who knows how to do this particular repair. You are typing a report for your boss that is due later the next day. A co-worker has come to you for help getting another report out by the end of the day. Your term paper is due next Friday and you have been working on it a little every day but are not close to completing it. Your boss calls and asks you to work late every night this week because Tom, your co-worker, has broken his leg and someone is needed to replace Tom.

1. List six tasks which need to be prioritized in the above situation.

A _____

B _____

Page 7 *** V-TECS DIRECT ***

ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

C _____

D _____

E _____

F _____

2. Rank the six tasks from most important (#1) to least important (#6) and explain the ranking of each task.

Priority #1 _____

Explain placement _____

Priority #2 _____

Explain placement _____

Priority #3 _____

Explain placement _____

Page 8 *** V-TECS DIRECT ***

ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task 006 Set priorities

Priority #4 _____

Explain placement _____

Priority #5 _____

Explain placement _____

Priority #6 _____

Explain placement _____

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY II

PERFORMANCE SKILL H006 - Set priorities

OBJECTIVE

Given a problem situation, students must organize and prioritize the workload to complete work assignments on schedule.

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Workplace Skills

Elements for

DUTY: H Solving Problems and Critical Thinking
TASK: 006 Set priorities.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following situation carefully. List all the work items that are to be done. Prioritize this list according to things that "MUST" be done, "SHOULD" be done and things that can "WAIT". Write one paragraph stating why you organized and prioritized the workload the way you did.

TIPS

1. List the work items to be done.
2. Prioritize the list according to the three categories.
3. Write one paragraph stating why you put the workload into those categories.

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY II

Work Assignment Worksheet

DIRECTIONS

Read the situation and identify what tasks must be completed. Prioritize the task by what must get done, should get done and what can wait. Prioritize the tasks from most important to least important.

SITUATION

It is 11:55 a.m. Your position is office assistant. You have assigned duties that you must perform daily such as delivering the mail, picking the mail up at the end of the day, filing, watering the plants and any necessary typing that is assigned to you by your boss. You also help

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities

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others doing various tasks when necessary. Your boss has just given you a two page letter to type that must go in the mail tonight. Also two letters which are dated to be sent tomorrow.

You still have to get the mail out by 4:30 and your co-worker has given you a stack of papers that must be copied by tomorrow at 4 p.m. Filing is piling up on your desk. You also have to fill the copy machine with paper sometime before it runs out as that is your assigned job. You also need to clean your desk out because it is office policy that all work areas should be neat and clean at all times to present an attractive setting to customers. The plants need watering. There are reference books, on your desk, that need to be returned to the office library; they have been on your desk for two days.

1. Set your priorities, what MUST get done today and what SHOULD be done and what things can WAIT until later. Organize those tasks in order of importance.

   A. THINGS THAT MUST GET DONE

      1. _____

      2. _____

      3. _____

   B. THINGS THAT SHOULD BE DONE

      1. _____

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities

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      2. _____

      3. _____

   C. THINGS THAT CAN WAIT

      1. _____

      2. _____

      3. _____

      4. _____

WHY I PRIORITIZED THE TASKS THE WAY I DID: _____

_____

_____

2. Using the same situation, prioritize the tasks in the order you feel is the most important to the least important to complete. Explain why you prioritized the task the way you did.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Why I organized the tasks the way I did

_____

_____

_____

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY II ANSWER KEY

1. A. THINGS THAT MUST GET DONE

      1. Type two page letter for boss

      2. Deliver mail

      3. Gather mail and fill copy machine

   B. THINGS THAT SHOULD GET DONE

      1. Copy work for co-worker

      2. File papers

      3. Return reference books

   C. THINGS THAT CAN WAIT

      1. Clean desk

      2. Water plants (this could be placed under "Things that should get done")

2. Can vary as long as reasoning is given.

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Workplace Skills

Elements for

DUTY: H Solving Problems and Critical Thinking
TASK: 006 Set priorities.

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ELEMENTS LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CHECKLIST

PERFORMANCE SKILL H006 - Set priorities

STANDARD

Six tasks in the three situations must be prioritized and the reasons for prioritization justified.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

Instruct students to read the situation and chose which task takes priority. Instruct them to defend their choice with two statements as to why they prioritized the way they did. *Note: students may prioritize differently depending on their values, family situations, etc.

DIRECTIONS

Use the following checklist to evaluate the student's performance. Place an "X" in the column to the right of each step to show that the student has passed.

	Passed
1. Identified the priority of the tasks found in the situation.	
2. Justified the priority for the six tasks.	

NOTE: All steps must be performed.

Page 2 *** V-TECS DIRECT ***

ITEM BANK LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities.

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* IL030L I IL I 07941 MC I H I 006 I C I 101 D I 0003171 I
Phil works for a company whose priorities are profit 1st, productivity 2nd and due dates 3rd. Which job should Phil give priority?

a. 500 units, due 4/14, $500 profit
b. 50 units, due 4/4, $200 profit
c. 200 units, due 4/20, $800 profit
d. 1000 units, due 4/10, $700 profit

* IL030L I IL I 07941 MC I H I 006 I C 210 I A I 0003181 I
An employee working for a one day delivery service would assign priority to a job based on:

a. delivery date.
b. how much it costs.
c. the margin of profit.
d. the mood of the customer.

Page 1 *** V-TECS DIRECT ***

ITEM BANK LIST

Occupation: 601 WORKPLACE SKILLS
Duty: H SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING
Task: 006 Set priorities

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* IL030L I IL I 07941 MC I H I 006 I C I 101 C I 0003141 I
Which job assignment would be completed first if working for a company that stresses productivity as a high priority?

a. One 5 hour job producing 4000 units
b. One all day job producing 6000 units
c. Five 1 hour jobs producing 5000 units
d. Five all day jobs producing 1600 units

* IL030L I IL I 07941 MC I H I 006 I C I 101 B I 0003151 I
The ranking of objectives by their importance to the problem is known as

a. organizational structuring.
b. prioritizing.
c. realistic evaluation.
d. the choice/conflict equation.

* IL030L I IL I 07941 MC I H I 006 I C I 101 D I 0003161 I
Generally, workloads should be prioritized by

a. easiest job to hardest job.
b. jobs you do not want to do.
c. the best paying to worst paying job.
d. earliest due date to later due date.

Similar material has been developed for every task in the Workplace Skills list!

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Illinois Workplace Skills Advisory Committee Members

Rick Klinedinst
National Bank of Canton
1600 East Chestnut
Canton, Illinois 61520
309/647-5000

Betty Wheatley
500 West Eldorado
Post Office Box 671
Decatur, Illinois 62525
217/423-4471

Dr. Tom Murray
Northern Illinois University
Williston Hall 325
DeKalb, Illinois 60115
815/753-1298

John Roark
317 North Water
Decatur, Illinois 62523
217/424-1475

Traci Sayre
Department of Personnel
St. Johns Hospital
9th and Carpenter
Springfield, Illinois 62769
217/525-5644

Paula Garrott, Director
Medical Technology
Sangamon State University
Shepherd Road
Springfield, Illinois 62794
217/786-6600

Ray Bergman
Modine Manufacturing
P. O. Box 458
McHenry, Illinois 60050
815/385-3964

Jim Cook
Magic Chef
410 Lyerla Drive
Herrin, Illinois 62948
618/988-8431 Ext 239

Allen Nelson
Furnas Electric
1000 McKee Street
Batavia, Illinois 60510
708/879-6000 Ext. 296

Jack Sheehan
Jack Sheehan and Associates
349 Downing Road
Riverside, Illinois 60546
708/442-6764

Dr. Harold Reetz, Jr.
Potash and Phosphate Institute
Route #2, Box 13
Monticello, Illinois 61856
217/762-2074

Maxine Glossey
Caterpillar
100 Northeast Adams
Peoria, Illinois 61629
309/675-1414

Diane Cain
One McDonald's Plaza
Oakbrook, Illinois 60521
708/575-5499

Linda Lafferty
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777
217/782-4620

Roger Uhe
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777
217/782-4877

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Workplace Skills National Advisory Committee Members

Alabama

Mr. James Kendrick, Coordinator
Vocational Curriculum Development Unit
Division of Vocational Education Services
Gordon Persons Building, Room 5234
Montgomery, AL 36130-3901
(205) 242-9108

Arkansas

Ms. Sherry Cox, Supervisor
Adult Education Section
Vocational-Technical Education Division
Arkansas Department of Education
Executive Building, Suite 620
202 West 3rd Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 372-2266

Dr. John Altland, Manager
Management Training and Development
Tyson Foods, Inc.
Rt. 3, Box 163
Russelleville, AR 72801
1-800-228-4750

Mr. Carl Hackelton
Human Resource Director
Easco Hand Tools
1609 North Old Missouri Road
Springdale, AR 72764
(501) 751-8500

Arizona

Dr. Charles Losh
Deputy Associate Superintendent
Vocational Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 542-5282

Georgia

Mr. Bill Faulks, Director of Employability Skill Development
Dr. Mike Walker, Director of Program Development
Georgia Department of Education
1766 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-4028

Dr. Paul Delargy
Georgia REAL Enterprise
295 East Daugherty Street
Suite 202
Athens, GA 30601
(404) 546-9061

Mr. Tom Murphy, Vice President
Murphy and Orr
564 Main Street
Forrest Park, GA 30050
(404) 366-2537

Florida

Dr. Paulette Mainwood
Curriculum & Staff Develop. Services
Div. of Vocational, Adult & Community Education
Florida Education Center
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
(904) 488-1839

Ms. Caroline Buchanan
Temp Force
1031 N.W. 6th Street
Gainsville, FL 32601
(904) 378-2300

Mr. Michell Glaeser
Glaeser Reality
1212 N.W. 8th Avenue
Gainsville, FL 32601
(904) 373-1776

Indiana

Dr. Peggy O'Malley, State Director
Department of Workforce Development
Commission of Vocational and Technical Education
Indiana Government Center South
10 North Senate
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2277
(317) 232-1832

Dr. Tommy Walters
Director of Education & Training
GTE Telephone Operations, North Area
P. O. Box 407
Westfield, IN 46074

Mr. John Daffara
Vice President Human Resources
Government & Community Relations
Borg-Warner Automotive - Muncie Plant
5401 Kilgore Avenue
Muncie, IN 47304
(317) 286-6462

Kentucky

Mr. Merle Insko
Division of Adult/Technical Education
20th Floor, Capital Plaza Towers
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-2890

Mr. Mark Cain
Personnel Manger
Henry Vogt Machine Company
P. O. Box 1918
Louisville, KY 40201-1918
(502) 634-1511

Maryland

Ms. Doris Sharkey, Specialist
Maryland State Department of Education
Curriculum Management System
Career and Technology Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Mr. Gary Kleiner
Employment Office
Bethlehem Steel
Sparrows Point Plant
5111 North Point Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21219

Ms. Anne Henderson
Branch Manager
Manpower, Inc.
120 East Baltimore Street, Suite 1810
Baltimore, MD 21202

Massachusetts

Dr. James LiaBraaten, Director
Massachusetts Vocational Curriculum Resource Center
c/o Minuteman Vo-Tech School
758 Marrett Road
Lexington, MA 02173
(617) 863-1863

Michigan

Ms. Gertrude Bonaparte
Guidance Consultant
Michigan Department of Education
Vocational-Technical Education Services
P. O. Box 30009
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 335-0351

Mr. Peter Casanova
Personnel Supervisor
McDonald's Corporation
2000 Town Center, Suite 700
Southfield, MI 48075

Mr. Jim Menapace
Manager of Technology
General Motors Corporation
3100 West Saginaw
Lansing, MI 48918

Workplace Skills National Advisory Committee Members

Mississippi

Dr. James McCully
Vocational-Technical Education
Drawer DX, Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762
(601) 325-2510

New Jersey

Dr. Martha Pocsi, Director
Occupational Competencies Project/
NECCC
NJ State Department of Education
Crest Way
Aberdeen, NJ 07747
(908) 290-1900

Mr. Steve Rangeloff, Manager
General Motors Training Center
Route 38
Moorestown, NJ 08050

New York

Mr. Mark McFarlane
New York State Education Department
Division of Occupational Education
One Commerce Plaza, Room 1623
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-4806

Mr. R. Quintus Anderson, Chairman
Arrque Companies
111 West 2nd Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 664-6014

Ms. Margarita Mayo
New York Business Council, Inc.
152 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210
(518) 465-7511

Mr. Tom Thacher, Manager
International Paper
Share Airport Road
Tiaconderoga, NY 12883
(518) 585-6761 Ext. 564

North Carolina

Ms. Meg Murphy, Consultant
Program Improvement Unit, Special
Programs & Services
Department of Public Instruction
534 Education Building
Raleigh, NC 27603-1717
(919) 733-7094

Oklahoma

Mr. John Smith
Testing Specialist
Curriculum & Instructional Materials Center
State Department of Voc. Tech. Education
1500 West 7th Avenue
Stillwater, OK 74074
(405) 743-5595

Oregon

Ms. Claudia Leppert
Oregon Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway, S.E.
Salem, OR 92310-0290
(503) 378-2954

Pennsylvania

Mr. Dave Closky
Curriculum Development Coordinator
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
(717) 783-6592

Mr. Don Harvey
Chief Counsel & Director of
Governmental Affairs
McCrory's
2955 East Market Street
York, PA 17405

Mr. Myron Crumrine
Manger of Engineering
33 Barbour Street
Bradford, PA 16701

Mr. Joseph Mangar
Manager of Employee Development
& Programs
Fuller Company
2040 Avenue C, P.O. Box 2040
Lehigh Valley, PA 18001-2040

South Carolina

Ms. Julie Anderson
State Department of Education
904 Rutledge Building
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 253-4029

South Dakota

Mr. Ed Mueller
700 Governors Drive
Richard F. Kneip Building
Pierre, SD 57501-2293
(605) 773-3423

Mr. Jim Glover, Chief Executive Officer
Hubcity, Inc.
2924 Ind. Avenue
Aberdeen, SD 57401
(605) 225-0360

Mr. Ron Williamson
City Bank
701 East 60th N.
Sioux Falls, SD 57101
(605) 331-2626

Mr. Paul Muth, Vice President
Muth Elect.
400 North Rowley
Mitchell, SD 57301
(605) 996-3983

Tennessee

Dr. Lynn Cohen
Tennessee Department of Education
200 Cordell Hull Building
Nashville, TN 73219
(615) 741-1931

Mr. Randy Harley
American Calendar Comp.
P. O. Box 69
Greeneville, TN 37744
(615) 638-3165

Mr. Dan Ledbetter
Federal Express Company
Manager Composition & Graphics
Federal Express Publishing Services
3350 MIAC Cove
Memphis, TN 38118
(901) 360-5265

Virginia

Ms. Peggy Watson
Virginia Voc. Curriculum &
Resource Center
2200 Mountain Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060
(804) 262-7439

Mr. William A. Wagner
Tidewater Equipment Company
P. O. Box 57
Norfolk, VA 23501
1-800-547-2181

Ms. Lynn Wilson
Coordinator for Educational Services
Virginia Power
P. O. Box 2666
Richmond, VA 23261
1-800-771-3041

Bureau of Prisons

Mr. William Anthony
Education Administrator
S.E. Region U.S. Bureau of Prisons
523 McDonough Blvd., S.E.
Atlanta, GA 30315

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National Field Test Sites

George Martin, Director
Vocational Education
Phoenix City Board of Education
1212 9th Avenue, P. O. Box 460
Phoenix City, AL 36867
(205) 298-0534 Fax (205) 298-2674

David Muehlbauer, Director
Program Improvement
Arizona Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 542-5352; Fax (602) 542-1849

Jeff Chandler
Georgia Department of Education
1770 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-2562; Fax (404) 651-8984

Fran Beauman, Manager
Vocational Education Innovation and
Performance Management
Department of Adult, Vocational and
Technical Education
100 N. First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
(217) 782-4620; Fax (217) 782-0679

Marlene Knopp
Division of Assessment
Indiana Department of Education
229 Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2738
(317) 232-9057; Fax (317) 232-9121

Terry Fields
10 North Senate Avenue
Department of Workforce Development
Indianapolis, IN 47456
(317) 232-1829; Fax (317) 232-1815

John Horton/Meryl Insko
Workforce Development Cabinet
Division of Instructional Support
Capitol Plaza Tower
550 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-2890; Fax (502) 564-4800

Doris Sharkey
Career and Technical Education
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 333-2062; Fax (410) 333-2099

Naomi Bryson/Gertrude Bonaparte
Vocational Technical Education Service
608 W. Allegan Street
P. O. Box 3009
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 373-8358; Fax (517) 373-8776

Martha Pocsi
Northeast Curriculum Center
New Jersey Department of Education
Crest Way
Aberdeen, NJ 07747
(908) 290-9678

Claudia Leppert
Oregon Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway
Salem, OR 97310-0290
(503) 378-3584; Fax (503) 378-5156

Bill Reilly
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Vocational-Technical Ed.
333 Market Street, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
(717) 787-8804; Fax (717) 783-6672

Roger Goupil, Education Associate
Curriculum Development Unit
1831 Barnwell Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 253-4029; Fax (803) 734-8624

John Smith
Curriculum and Instruct. Materials Center
State Department of Voc. Tech Education
1500 West 7th Avenue
Stillwater, OK 74074
(405) 743-5411; Fax (405) 743-5142

Janice Hanlon, Program Manager
Career Orientation-General Cooperative
Education Workplace Readiness
Arkansas Department of Education
3 Capitol Mall/Luther S. Hardin Building
Little Rock, AR 72201-1083
(501) 682-1616; Fax (501) 682-1509

Bill Anthony, Education Administrator
Southeast Region/U.S. Bureau of Prisons
523 McDonough Boulevard, S.E.
Atlanta, GA 30315
(404) 624-5210; Fax (404) 624-8161

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V-TECS
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

(404) 679-4501 ext. 543
(800) 248-7701 ext. 543

e-mail:
vtecs@mindspring.com

V-TECS Homepage Address:
www.mindspring.com/~vtecs

Appendix B

Inventory as Modified and Implemented in Hawaii

Vocational Technical Education (V-TECS)
Inventory of Generic Workplace Skills

University of Hawaii
Office of the State Director for Vocational Education

Directions: Circle the number that best reflects its value in you organization.

	Criteria	Rating				
		low				high
1.0	DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN					
1.1	Match interests to employment area.	1	2	3	4	5
1.2	Match aptitudes to employment area.	1	2	3	4	5
1.3	Identify short term work goals.	1	2	3	4	5
1.4	Match attitudes to job area.	1	2	3	4	5
1.5	Match personality type to job area.	1	2	3	4	5
2.0	SEEKING AND APPLYING FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES					
2.1	Locate employment opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	Identify job requirements.	1	2	3	4	5
2.3	Locate resources for fining employment.	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	Prepare a resume.	1	2	3	4	5
2.5	Prepare for job interview.	1	2	3	4	5
2.6	Write job application letter.	1	2	3	4	5
2.7	Write interview follow-up letter.	1	2	3	4	5
2.8	Complete job application form.	1	2	3	4	5
2.9	Identify attire for job interview.	1	2	3	4	5

	Criteria	Rating				
		low				high
3.0	ACCEPTING EMPLOYMENT					
3.1	Complete employee's Withholding Allowance	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	Certificate Form W-4	1	2	3	4	5
4.0	COMMUNICATING ON THE JOB					
4.1	Interpret the use of body language	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Prepare written communication	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	Follow written directions	1	2	3	4	5
5.0	INTERPRETING THE ECONOMICS OF WORK					
5.1	Describe responsibilities of job assignment	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	Describe responsibilities of employer or management	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	Investigate opportunities and options for business ownership	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	Assess entrepreneurship skills	1	2	3	4	5
5.5	Identify work-related terminology	1	2	3	4	5
6.0	ADAPTING AND COPING WITH CHANGE					
6.1	Evaluate the transition plan	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	Exhibit ability to handle stress	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	Recognize need to change or quit a job	1	2	3	4	5

	Criteria	Rating				
		low				high
7.0	SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL THINKING					
7.1	Identify the problem	1	2	3	4	5
7.2	Identify solutions to a problem and their impact	1	2	3	4	5
7.3	Employ reasoning skills	1	2	3	4	5
7.4	Evaluate options	1	2	3	4	5
7.5	Set priorities	1	2	3	4	5
7.6	Select and implement a solution to a problem	1	2	3	4	5
7.7	Evaluate results of implemented option	1	2	3	4	5
7.8	Access employer and employee responsibility in solving a problem	1	2	3	4	5
8.0	MAINTAINING SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT					
8.1	Identify safety and health rules/procedures	1	2	3	4	5
8.2	Demonstrate the knowledge of equipment in the work place	1	2	3	4	5
8.3	Act during emergencies	1	2	3	4	5
8.4	Maintain work area	1	2	3	4	5
8.5	Identify hazardous substances in the work place	1	2	3	4	5
9.0	DEMONSTRATING WORK ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR					
9.1	Identify established rules, regulations and policies	1	2	3	4	5
9.2	Practice cost effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5

	Criteria	Rating				
		low				high
9.3	Practice time management.	1	2	3	4	5
9.4	Assume responsibility for decisions and actions.	1	2	3	4	5
9.5	Display initiative.	1	2	3	4	5
9.6	Display assertiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
9.7	Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
10.0	DEMONSTRATING TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY					
10.1	Demonstrate basic keyboard skills.	1	2	3	4	5
10.2	Demonstrate computing basic knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
11.0	MAINTAINING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS					
11.1	Value individual diversity.	1	2	3	4	5
11.2	Channel and control emotional reactions.	1	2	3	4	5
11.3	Resolve conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
11.4	Display a positive attitude.	1	2	3	4	5
12.0	DEMONSTRATING TEAM WORK					
12.1	Match team member skills and group activity.	1	2	3	4	5
12.2	Work with team members.	1	2	3	4	5
12.3	Complete a relevant task.	1	2	3	4	5
12.4	Evaluate outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5

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